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Annie Shibata

HCC launching women's leadership training program

HOLYOKE – Building on the success of its popular Women's Leadership Luncheon Series, Holyoke Community College is launching an eight-week training program for women who want to develop and enhance their leadership skills.

For convenience, the program, "Women Leaning Into Leadership 2021: Empowering Your Voice," is being offered over Zoom in two separate, eight-week sessions: One meets on Wednesdays, Jan. 6 through Feb. 24, from 6:30

WOMEN, 11

Students must get flu shots

HOLYOKE – As a reminder, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health now requires the influenza vaccine, (the "flu shot") for ALL students whether they are remote or in-person learners by Dec. 31 of this year. It's important for your child to get the flu shot to reduce the risk of getting sick with influenza, reduce the disease severity if your child gets sick (including the risk of hospitalization), and to prevent the spread to others.

FLU, 11

Police dept. collecting toys

HOLYOKE – It's that Holiday time of year again and the Holyoke Police Department, along with the Hampden County Sheriff's Department, will be collecting toys for the less fortunate children of Holyoke. This is a wonderful tradition begun by our Narcotics Detectives over 30 years ago and the need this year is expected to be greater than ever before.

Unfortunately, because

TOYS, 11

Student finds niche designing shoes

By Shelby Macri
smacri@turley.com

HOLYOKE – A Holyoke High School senior was recognized by the Performing and Media Arts teacher Bevan Brunelle for his customized shoe designs. The student, Jonathan Baez started these designs as a side project but it has grown to be more.

When he was still a junior Baez had seen a customized jean jacket that was expensive with a fairly simple design and concept, he decided to get his own materials and make a similar product. After grabbing a jean jacket and a packet of fabric paints, Baez created a design on the back of the jacket that interested him. He wore it to school and many friends and other students complimented him on it.

"People really liked, they thought it was cool and I ended up doing someone jeans before my friends asked me to do her shoes." Baez said. "I did a custom set for her and my cousin saw my interest in it, he does the same stuff so he ordered me the right kind of paint. I wouldn't be where I am if he hadn't helped me." After designing his friend's shoes, and her wearing them around, people started to ask about the maker. This joined



Jonathan Baez, a Holyoke High School student, designed pairs of shoes like these. Baez was recently recognized for his outstanding work.

Submitted photos

with his postings online helped him to gain attention.

After he received positive feedback from his clothes and first pair of shoes, Baez decided to continue practicing his art and investing in designing shoes. "After the first pair it took a while to pick up." Baez said. "I was doing my own shoes and posting pictures on my Instagram." He received comments and messages online from people asking him to do their shoes as well, though at the time Baez didn't have the correct paints to give a good

product to people willing to pay money for his work.

When quarantine hit, Baez's cousin sent him a set of paints and that's what encouraged Baez to answer those who asked for his artwork. He shared that he started designing these shoes and things in order to not be bored after school, it wasn't anything serious at first. Now he takes request for people and depending on the complexity of a design, he can produce a customized pair within two weeks or more with the longest taking

a month to create. While the shoe brand doesn't particularly matter, Baez said that he prefers to work with leather and textures similar to it as it holds the paint better.

Baez has done suede and fabric shoes, but he admits that the paint looks and acts better on the leathery texture. He shared that he mainly works on Nike Air Force ones because the structure and texture works well with the paint. He had sold his first pair for 20 dollars

See SHOES, page 11

Mall hosts enlistment Army oath ceremony

By Shelby Macri
smacri@turley.com

HOLYOKE – The Holyoke Mall hosted the Oath of Enlistment for two groups of new recruits on Friday Dec. 4, where families and the public could see the ceremony.

Commander of the Springfield Army Recruiting Company Captain Stephen Lariviere explained that while this is his first year doing the Oath of Enlistment in the

Holyoke mall, his predecessor did a ceremony before him. The mall has hosted two Oath of Enlistment ceremonies so far and there may be more in the future.

"We're giving families and the public a way to see what we do. We're trying to be more personable and open." Capt. Lariviere said. "If people want to come up and talk to us they can. We're

See OATH, page 11



From left; Divin Banza, James Herman, Rafael Torres, Amber Afton, Capt. Stephen Lariviere, Cole Maslanka, Tamara Rodriguez, Giang Tran, Ethan Lichwan, Ernst Pedanov, and Erik Davila gather at the Holyoke mall to take the Oath of Enlistment.

Photo by Shelby Macri

McMahon principal: 'Teachers doing a tremendous job'

By Shelby Macri
smacri@turley.com

HOLYOKE – The Lt. Elmer J. McMahon school is not exempt from the district's remote learning model, and while there are options for teachers to work in the building many are choosing to stay remote as well.

Principal Rebecca Thompson explained that a few staff members started at home while others have gradually started to work from home. There are about 20 staff members in the building currently and they are staying safe and taking the necessary precautions while inside the building.

"I don't have an issue with teachers working from home because teachers are doing a tremendous job." Thompson said.

Though some are working from home, all teachers are working hard to make learning available and helpful to all students. Teachers keep enthusiasm throughout the

day and they all work together to make remote learning work. In addition to their regular classes, students go into "break-out" rooms where it's a smaller class-size and students can work together to problem solve and focus on something specific rather than a general overview of everything.

The break-out rooms are working well and helping students progress, teachers are being clear and concise with their plans in these rooms. Teachers are seeing the students behavior, and areas where they might need help in learning. While this step is important it can be hard to recognize over the screen, in break-out rooms cameras and mics are encouraged so teachers can help identify areas students need help with.

While in these smaller and more specifically focused rooms Thompson is able to turn on her mic and screen to interact with the students, and listen to their progress and

See TEACHERS, page 9

In The News

Industrial landscape history program to be offered

HOLYOKE — On Thursday, Dec. 17 at 6:30 p.m., Wistariahurst will host Hidden Walls, Hidden Mills: Reading the Lost Industrial Landscape of the Western Mass Hills a live, virtual program presented by Pleun Bouricius. This program is free and open to all but pre-registration is required.

Get ready for a history adventure! In a mixed video and slide show presentation focusing on Plainfield and Leverett, historian Pleun Bouricius will explore how to "read" the forested landscape, find cellar holes, understand mill sites, and learn how water mills were situated and worked.

In the first decades of the nineteenth century, Western Massachusetts was largely shorn of trees; trees shaped and cut in hundreds of mills that took advantage of fast-moving streams on steep hillsides. Out-competed and passed by during the nineteenth century, this industry left an indelible imprint on the land.

Now largely forested, the landscape is dotted with few farms and some houses — and any number of publicly accessible woods. Everywhere are stone sites, ready for a passer-by trying to imagine lives lived on a bare windswept hillside or next to a stream ready to sweep away a mill building in the next freshet.

This program has been specially designed to address the needs of area seniors, many of whom continue to be socially isolated as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The program is supported through a Community Development Block Grant - COVID-19 Grant to address, prevent, and respond to the COVID-19 Pandemic that is administered through the Holyoke Office of Community Development and has been planned in consultation with the Holyoke Council on Aging. Additional support has been provided through NEH CARES Act funding granted by Mass Humanities.



A virtual program on the industrial landscape will be offered next week.

Submitted photo

To register for Hidden Walls, Hidden Mills: Reading the Lost Industrial Landscape of the Western Mass Hills or any future programs, please visit www.Wistariahurst.org or contact Eileen Maginnis at the Holyoke Council on Aging at maginnise@holyoke.org. If you

have an idea for a topic you'd like to be considered for a future Wistariahurst session, please contact info@wistariahurst.org. Future virtual programs will focus on a diverse range of historical and cultural topics including programs on nature, art, history, travel, and social justice.

Bright Nights to remain open later

SPRINGFIELD — Bright Nights at Forest Park has received permission from Lieutenant Governor Karen Polito to extend entry to the show until 9:30 p.m. as of Saturday, Dec. 5. The Spirit of Springfield had been allowing cars to enter Forest Park until 8:45 p.m. due to Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker's current COVID-19 order.

"It is an extra 45 minutes of holiday cheer each night during a time when it is so needed," said Spirit of Springfield President Judy Matt. "We want as many families as possible to fill their hearts with the warmth of the holiday season while staying safe in their car. We are grateful to have the opportunity to continue to make Bright Nights a holiday tradition for so many."

Bright Nights at Forest Park will operate nightly through January 6, 2021, opening at 4:45 p.m. and closing the entrance at 9:30 p.m. To follow COVID-19 safety protocols, tickets must be purchased in advance, online at brightnights.org or at Big Y World Class Markets. Visitors must stay in their vehicles at all times and wear masks when interacting with others.

Restrooms are available at the entry for emergency use only.

Bright Nights' 26th season is sponsored by AAA — Pioneer Valley, American Eagle Financial Credit Union, American Medical Response, Balise Auto, Baystate Health, Big Y World Class Markets, C & S Wholesale Grocers, Charlie Arment Trucking Inc., Comcast, Eversource Energy, Gleason Johndrow Landscaping, Health New England (HNE), iHeart Media, MassLive, MassMutual, Mercy Medical Center, MGM Springfield, MP PC, PeoplesBank, The Republican, Smith & Wesson, Springfield Thunderbirds, and WWLP-22News.

The Spirit of Springfield has been collaborating with the Springfield Department of Parks, Buildings and Recreation Management since 1995 to present Bright Nights at Forest Park. The holiday lighting experience has entertained more than six million people and this year as recognized by the American Bus Association as one of their Best of the Best in their Festival and Events category.

Free COVID-19 vaccines at Big Y pharmacies when available

SPRINGFIELD — In partnership with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, all 33 Big Y Pharmacy and Wellness Centers are preparing to administer the COVID-19 vaccines once approved and available for distribution. This partnership is being established in anticipation that one or more COVID-19 vaccines will be authorized and approved for use in the United States as part of the Federal Pharmacy Partnership Strategy for COVID-19. This initiative by the HHS with pharmacies across the United States is part of the federal pharmacy program aimed to further increase access to the vaccines. The partnership has deemed pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and pharmacy interns in retail and grocery stores as being crucial public health partners for increasing access and convenience of COVID-19 vaccines.

Big Y's pharmacy team currently provides seasonal flu and other routine vaccines. They plan to participate in any additional training to ensure the safe administration of the vaccine along with educating their customers about the

process.

According to Charles L. D'Amour, president and CEO, "We are proud to partner with the United States government in order to provide free COVID-19 vaccines to our customers. When a vaccine is available, our pharmacy teams will be ready to administer them as per CDC guidelines."

Big Y Foods, Inc. is one of the largest independently owned supermarket chains in New England. Big Y operates 85 locations throughout Massachusetts and Connecticut including 71 supermarkets, Fresh Acres Market, Table & Vine Fine Wines and Liquors and 12 Big Y Express gas and convenience locations with almost 12,000 employees. Big Y has been recognized by Forbes as a Best-in-State Employer in Massachusetts and Connecticut, as well as 2018 Employer of Choice by the Employers Association of the Northeast. Founded in 1936 by brothers Paul and Gerald D'Amour, the store was named after an intersection in Chicopee, Massachusetts where two roads converge to form a "Y".

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*Offers Expire on 1/2/2021



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Literacy specialist starts 'See More Smiles' campaign

HOLYOKE – As the pandemic wore on with no end in sight, Jackie Santana grew more and more frustrated.

The proliferation of masks and other face coverings to help stop the spread of COVID-19 had made daily life much more difficult for her, a deaf woman who depends on lip-reading as well as sign language to communicate.

This was particularly apparent in places like grocery stores, where cashiers sometimes got angry when they couldn't understand her or she couldn't understand them. Some outright refused to write down what they were trying to say.

A Springfield resident, Santana wrote about her experiences in the spring newsletter published by the Holyoke Community College Ludlow Area Adult Learning Center, where she is a student.

"People sometimes use pantomimes or gestures to get my attention," she wrote. "But it's hard with those masks. Hearing people don't realize when they have their masks on, they're covering their mouths, and they don't realize how important it is for deaf people to see them talking."

She explored buying masks with clear mouth windows, but the companies that manufacture them were all sold out at the time. With some 48 million deaf or hard of hearing people in the United States, according to statistics, demand had outstripped supply.

"It would be nice to have more masks that let you see people's lips," Santana wrote.

Enter Ash Aliengena, a literacy specialist at HCC's Ludlow Adult Area Learning Center.

Inspired by Santana's essay, Aliengena decided to start making masks with clear plastic windows and created a website offering free accessible face mask patterns, where people can "Click. Print. Cut. Trace. Go."

Aliengena's "See More Smiles" campaign is a collaboration with HCC's Office for Students with Disabilities & Deaf Services (OSDDS), which is helping to spread the word.

To date, Aliengena, who uses the pronouns they/them, has hand-sewn more than 60 masks and given most of them away to people they work with at the center and to public school teachers in Holyoke.

"Jackie's essay opened my eyes to the need for window-ed masks," Aliengena said. "Her self-advocacy got the whole thing started."

Aliengena started by researching existing mask patterns and then created an original design that uses clear, heavy plastic for the mouth window. The patterns and instructions are available for free on the See More Smiles" website Aliengena maintains. There are patterns for both adult and child sizes along with

photographs of finished products. The patterns print true to size on standard 8.5 by 11-inch copy paper or card stock so they can easily be cut out and traced onto fabric.

"I feel great about this project," Santana said recently. "I think it is a great idea."

As far as the effectiveness of masks with plastic windows to combat the spread of COVID-19, David Aronoff, director of infectious disease at the Vanderbilt Institute for Infection, Immunology and Inflammation, recently told National Public Radio that the virus cannot penetrate plastic or solid materials, "so see-through masks provide potentially a great option for balancing infection prevention with the desire to be able to see somebody's mouth move."

Aliengena gave one of the windowed masks to HCC president Christina Royal. She wore it recently on a visit to the dentist, where it drew a lot of attention from office staff, who asked for the link to the "See More Smiles" website, hcc.edu/see-more-smiles.

Royal said Aliengena's masks are a "great reflection of universal design principles" – an accommodation beneficial for deaf and hearing people alike.

"Windowed or clear face masks allow everyone to see and read each other's mouths – to speech-read," said Aliengena, who lives in Holyoke. "These masks are



A mask campaign has started at HCC to get more "smiles" out.

Submitted photo

intended to restore important modes of visual and emotional communication that get lost when we cover our faces with solid masks."

Those visual and emotional cues, like seeing people smile, can make a world of difference.

"For certain populations visual communication is even more important: the elderly, children, language learners, and those in mental health crises are just a few examples," they said. "For members of the deaf and hard of hearing community, visual communication is absolutely central. So, when the pandemic started, millions of people who rely on seeing faces and mouths suddenly lost their primary mode of communicating with the hearing population overnight, just like that."

Salvation Army returns to mall

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Mall is pleased to welcome The Salvation Army back to the shopping center for another holiday season with both their Red Kettle Campaign and their Angel Giving Tree. Volunteer bell ringers can be seen at various entrances to the shopping center collecting much needed donations through Dec. 24. In addition, their Angel Giving Tree is set up on the upper level near AT&T. Guests can pull a tag from the tree and purchase the gift requested by a child. Toys, clothes and other gifts purchased can then be delivered along with the tag to The Salvation Army's Holyoke Corps Community Center located at 271 Appleton Street.

The money raised during the Red Kettle Campaign is a critical source of funding for vital programs and services for tens of thousands of families, youth and senior citizens in Holyoke, Chicopee South Hadley and Granby and across Massachusetts each year. This includes Christmas toys and other holiday support for those in need, along with funding for food pantries, soup kitchens, social services, and education programs throughout the year.

"Giving back to the communities we serve, particularly in times of greater need, is incredibly important to Pyramid Management Group and the guests who graciously choose to donate every holiday season at our properties," said Stephen J. Congel, chief executive officer, Pyramid Management Group. "We are honored to continue this important tradition and partnership with the Salvation Army and provide our guests with an opportunity to give back in a manner that's safe for everyone. The partnership is especially

meaningful to our guests since the funds raised at each one of our centers remains in the communities they were donated."

In 2019, the Red Kettle campaign at Holyoke Mall raised over \$23,000. Needed funds that are typically raised through the organization's iconic red kettles are at risk this year due to COVID-19 while requests for services are at an all-time high. The Salvation Army projects that donations to the Red Kettle will be down by more than 50% while requests for assistance could increase by 155% if resources are available. To make the donation process safer this holiday season, all red kettles are equipped with NFC technology accepting Apple Pay and Google Pay. The Salvation Army has adopted nationally mandated safety protocols and implemented training around cleaning and sanitizing the red kettles. Donors can also set up their own virtual kettle at salvationarmyma.org/rescuechristmas if they prefer to donate online. Digital donations through Apple Pay and Google Pay are also strongly encouraged to cut down on points of contact.

The Red Kettle tradition began in 1891 when Salvation Army Captain Joseph McFee wanted to help feed needy citizens in San Francisco. McFee remembered the ferry landings in Liverpool England, where people would sit with small kettles that travelers would toss spare change into to help the less fortunate. Placing his own kettle on Market Street in Oakland California, McFee was able to help individuals on Christmas. The idea traveled to Boston in 1897 and the Red Kettle Campaign has been a tradition ever since.

Church to host 'drive-thru' holiday event

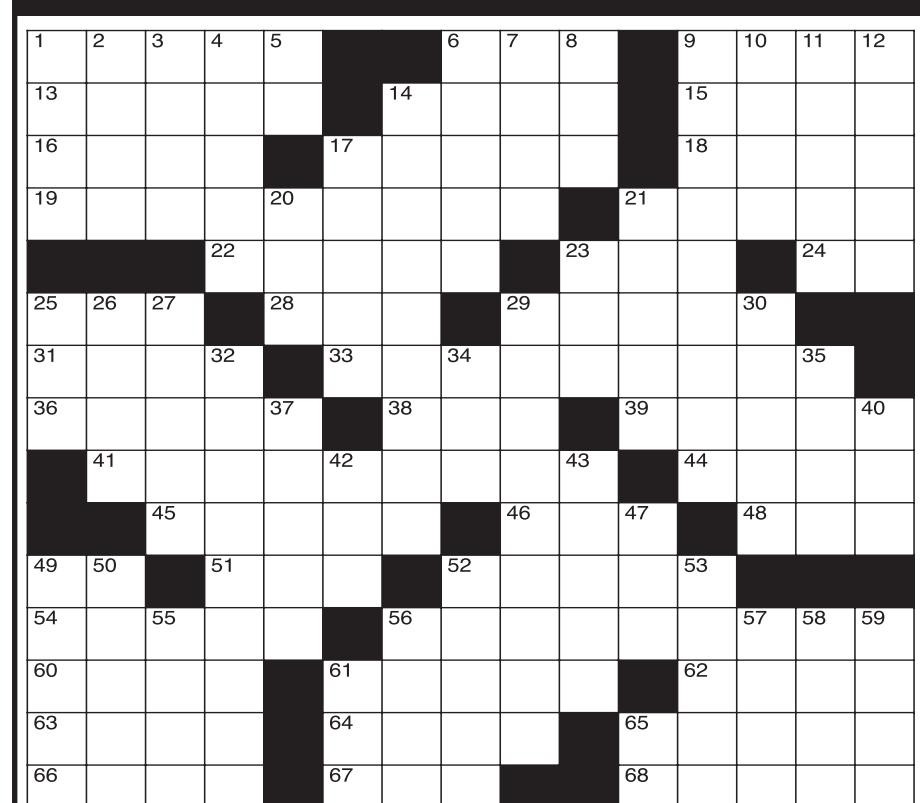
AGAWAM – Looking for a fun and safe activity this Christmas season? Please join Bethany Assembly of God as they host "A Bethany Christmas," a narrated drive-thru Christmas experience.

The drive-thru will contain displays, characters, carolers and thousands of lights, as well as live scenes, sharing a message of hope and faith.

This drive-thru event is a gift to the

community and is free to the public, but they will be accepting donations which will be used to build schools for children in Latin America.

The final weekend for the event will be Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, Dec. 11, 12, and 13. The times are Friday from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. Bethany Assembly of God is located at 580 Main Street, Agawam, MA.



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Skateboarders love them
- 6. Popular sports podcast (abbr.)
- 9. Former Ohio State great Michael
- 13. Not dirty
- 14. Earth goddess (Greek myth.)
- 15. A Spanish river
- 16. Pig meat (French)
- 17. Famed astronomer
- 18. Floating ice
- 19. Broadcast
- 21. Aquatic mammals
- 22. Some are bath
- 23. Hip hop trio
- 24. NY Giants' #56
- 25. Small European viper
- 28. Neither
- 29. Multiple Tony-winner Rivera
- 31. Loud noise
- 33. Second year high schooler

CLUES DOWN

- 36. "__ in comparison"
- 38. Golf score
- 39. Raise
- 41. Pastas
- 44. Easily manageable
- 45. Fathered
- 46. Pouch
- 48. Institute legal proceedings against
- 49. News organization
- 51. Unruly group of people
- 52. Fasten or secure
- 54. Sheets of glass
- 56. Doubled
- 60. Foolish person
- 61. Rooney and Kate are two
- 62. Small, rich sponge cake
- 63. Advice or counsel
- 64. Large wading bird
- 65. Famed British physicist
- 66. Narrow ridges (Swedish)
- 67. Field force unit
- 68. Lying face downward
- 69. Proof of purchase (abbr.)
- 70. Soap ingredient
- 71. Blackbird
- 72. Single steps
- 73. Tin
- 74. Books have lots of them
- 75. Made of fermented honey and water
- 76. You can get it in a bed
- 77. Room for communal meals
- 78. Early Syrian kingdom
- 79. Provokes dry amusement
- 80. Use with "thou"
- 81. Grains storage units
- 82. Not a car, not a truck
- 83. Ooze
- 84. Vietnamese ethnic group
- 85. Tennis pros group
- 86. Something that's not what it's purported
- 87. E. Indian trees
- 88. Beloved December holiday
- 89. Regions
- 90. Metric unit of length
- 91. Peter's last name
- 92. Beige
- 93. 18-year period in astronomy
- 94. Where golfers begin
- 95. Basketball stat (abbr.)
- 96. Frocks
- 97. Soda comes in it
- 98. On approval
- 99. Trims by cutting
- 100. Small finch
- 101. Language Bura-
- 102. Nothing
- 103. Imbecile (British)
- 104. Tropical Asian plant
- 105. Abba __, Israeli politician
- 106. Small freshwater fish
- 107. Indicates position
- 108. Data processing

CROSSWORD ANSWER on page 9

Opinion

Poetry Corner

We Had It All With Self Responsibility

By Thomas J. Kennedy

No car, two or four phone connection
We always knew – not alone . . .
No welfare wanted – Self Responsibility

We had it all –
Love and Discipline and Freedom
And we were grounded in all areas.

No television but radio strong
No car till later
As we walked to ball fields, church, school
Who needed a vacation –
Bum to Hampton Ponds.

Today children over visualized
Given information not need –
Takes away their self creativity
And vision – Too much fear.
Trust broken –
who's protecting them, setting example . . .

No privacy, little speaking
And listening
Too much over valued technology.
We need over humanity first.
We need character, honesty –
One's true identity.

Children can't stare visually
for eight hours.
Some children do poorly –
feel alone, beyond lonely.
Can't adjust unless at school.
More teacher classroom support.
Depression, Mental Illness young victims . . .

Now you tell me
What's the golden rule.
A long slow childhood
Greatest injustice to me.
To destroy a child's childhood.
God bless all children. Peace, Love and Joy.



Guest Columns

Should I Claim Social Security at 62?

By Russell Gloor

Dear Rusty: I'm looking for information about retiring and starting my Social Security very soon at age 62. I'm not sure if I want to do it because I'm not sure if I can. Can you help me figure this out? Signed: Hesitant

Dear Hesitant: I know it can be daunting trying to figure out whether and when to claim your Social Security benefits. I'll give you some of the basics:

First, you should know that if you claim your benefits at age 62, your benefit amount will be considerably reduced from what it would be if you waited longer to claim. At 62, your benefit will be about 28% less than it would be at your full retirement age (FRA)

which, for you is 66 years and 8 months. Your benefit will continue to grow by a fraction of a percentage point each month you wait, until it reaches 100% at your FRA.

You can choose to delay even longer than your FRA, and your benefit will continue to grow up to age 70 when you reach your maximum benefit amount. For you, that maximum at age 70 would be about 28% more than you would get at your FRA and about 75% more than you would get at age 62. There is a considerable financial advantage to waiting to claim.

If you continue working, and you claim at age 62 (or at any age before your FRA), you'll be subject to Social Security's "earn-

SOCIAL SECURITY MATTERS

See SECURITY, page 6

Guest Column

Coriander, fit for cookie-making

My family and I have been enjoying Christmas by Candlelight at Old Sturbridge Village for as long as the program has been running. Wanting to visit the Village after a long work day is through is a real testament to how wonderful this evening event is. It was there that we first sampled a coriander cookie made by a recipe from the early 19th century. We thought it was so yummy, in fact, that it became a welcome addition to our Christmas cookie repertoire. With a double batch under my belt just this afternoon, there is no time like the present to learn about this really neat, multi-purpose plant.

Most gardeners already know that coriander (*Coriandrum sativum*) is one of the few herbs that goes by two different names depending on the part of the plant used. Its foliage, known as cilantro, is used fresh in a number of culinary delights. When the plant goes to seed, known as coriander, it can be used in that stage as well, eaten whole, crushed or powdered.

I liken cilantro to be the "marigold" of the herb world. Either you love it or you hate it. I, for one, immensely dislike it and if given the chance to pick it out of my salsa I will certainly do so. Even in a restaurant. I found it interesting to learn that some people possess a genetically predisposed aversion to it, according to studies by Charles J. Wysocki, of the Monell Chemical Senses Center, in Philadelphia. To me it has a bitter taste that I have a hard time describing beyond that. Dirty? Soil-like? Most people



ROBERTA MCQUAID
TURLEY PUBLICATIONS COLUMNIST

that do dislike it have a similar lack of descriptive ability; they just can't put their finger on it, but they don't like the taste...or the smell of it.

It's funny that when my oldest daughter received her Ancestry DNA results, she was shown not to possess the genetic aversion. Well, she didn't get that from me....

Cilantro is often used in salsa and other Mexican, Asian and

Italian dishes including curries, sauces, salads and soups. If you prefer to grow the plant more for its greens and less for its seeds, manage it as you would spinach. Sow seeds in the ground in the cool of the season and in succession every two weeks. It dislikes being transplanted but doesn't mind pot culture. Harvest greens rather aggressively- about one-third of the plant at a time. Just like spinach, there are slow-to-bolt varieties to choose from such as aptly named 'Slow Bolt' and 'Longstanding.' Cilantro's flowers are edible and they attract lots of beneficial insects such as lady beetles, parasitic wasps and syrphid flies.

Coriander seeds, on the other hand, have a pleasant (at least to me) fragrance once dried. The scent is easier to pinpoint too; nutty and spicy (ever so slightly) come to

mind. Coriander seed is also well known in various ethnic cuisines and is a favorite in spice blends, curry being the most popular. It is also used in the making of a number of distilled spirits, herbal liqueurs and Christmas cookies as I have come to find out and favor!

The Herb Society noted that during World War II coriander seeds were coated in white or pink sugar and thrown from carnival wagons, earning the name "confections" or "confetti" When the seeds were replaced by balls of colored paper the name confetti stuck. Take this one to your next game of Cruise Ship Trivia!

It is easy to harvest the seeds. Simply let the heads dry to brown right on the plant. Clip them and place inside a paper bag; as they dry further they will open and the seeds will pop out.

Even if you are only interested in harvesting the seeds, multiple plantings (or a big garden patch) are necessary to get a decent-sized harvest. Let a few drop their seeds and you will be blessed with a few self sown plants next spring.

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For the last 28 years, she has held the position of staff horticulturalist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to ekennedy@turley.com with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.



PLEASE REMEMBER TO RECYCLE THIS NEWSPAPER

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A Quote

OF NOTE

"Nothing ever seems too bad, too hard, or too sad when you've got a Christmas tree in the living room."

Nora Roberts

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Unsigned or anonymous letters will NOT be published.

We reserve the right to edit or withhold any submissions. Libelous, unsubstantiated allegations, personal attacks or defamation of character are not allowed.

Deadline for submissions is Wednesday at noon.

Please email (preferred) letters to thesun@turley.com. Mailed letters can be sent to *The Sun*, 24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069.



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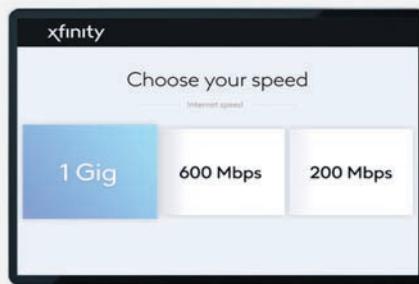
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In The News

Online shopping scams could spike during the holidays

By Dalton Zbierski
Staff Writer

MARLBOROUGH – Online shopping has become more prominent than ever during the COVID-19 pandemic, and scammers are itching for the chance to take advantage of unknowing consumers this holiday season.

For that very reason, the Better Business Bureau of Central New England is hard at work uncovering scams and spreading awareness in effort to prevent residents from being swindled. Nancy Cahalen, President of the BBB's Central New England office in Marlborough, shed light on the intricate and ever evolving world of online scamming.

"With the holidays approaching, it's time for people to do a lot of online shopping, and scams relating to online purchases were already on the rise in 2019," said Cahalen. "Since the pandemic began, they've spiked much higher. Scammers are taking advantage of the fact that people are doing a lot more shopping online and maybe aren't as savvy and familiar with it."

The BBB reports that 80.5% of consumers who have reported online scams in

2020 lost money. In 2019, only 24.3% of consumers who were scammed online lost money, a rising figure that Cahalen attributes to fear uncertainty and the "COVID affect."

Beginning in March and April, scammers jumped at the chance to cheat consumers attempting to purchase personal protective equipment online. As the season of giving approaches, and online shopping continues to become more commonplace, scammers have already begun an onslaught of cheating.

Hope still exists, however, as the BBB Scam Tracker is up and running. The investigative tool tracks all reported scams and alerts residents to their existence.

Since being launched in 2015, the Scam Tracker has enabled in-depth studies of online purchase scams. The data that the BBB has compiled from victims has thwarted countless other scams.

"We ask people to report scams whether or not they lose money because we want to prevent other people from being scammed. The more information about scams that we can get out there, the better," said Cahalen.

When eying potential scams, unre-

asonably attractive sale prices are typically suspect. If an offer is too good to be true, it most likely is.

Additionally, individuals using debit cards or peer-to-peer payment options such as Venmo are more likely to be scammed and lose money than those who use debit cards. Cahalen explained a well-observed trend.

"When shopping online, we always recommend paying with a credit card because there's protection built in, and you can always refute the charge if it turns out that there is a scam. People who use credit cards are less likely to lose money," she said.

Recently, scammers have developed false tracking information to throw off consumers awaiting their goods in the mail. By the time the irregularity is realized, the scammer is often out of reach, and money spent on the expected item is lost.

Scarcity also allows scammers to lie their way towards stealing money. Just as was observed with PPE during the early stages of the pandemic, scammers are primed to rip off individuals who are unable to find their desired goods anywhere else.

"Availability can be a motivating factor

for those who lost money. A lot of things became scarce during COVID, but the holidays always have had scarce, popular items. There's scarcity always during the holiday season," said Cahalen.

Individuals perpetrating online scams rely on consumer patterns. Pop-up advertisements observed on social media pages cannot always be trusted, said Cahalen, as scammers pay close attention to items that most searched for.

"Scammers have access to the same marketing tools that legitimate marketers do," said Cahalen. "They really understand how consumers make these decisions. They're very educated on this. It's not a slapdash approach. They're also using the same online social media ads that legitimate marketers use. It's sometimes hard to pick out the scams from the ones that aren't."

All individuals can become the victim of a scam, regardless of their age, sex or demographic. Studies show that people between age 35 and 44 are most at risk to lose money to an online purchase scam.

For more information concerning the maze that is online scamming, residents can visit bbb.org.

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SECURITY, from page 4

ings test," which limits how much you can earn before they take back some of your benefits. Starting at age 62 and continuing until the year you attain FRA, there will be an annual limit to your earnings (the 2021 limit is \$18,960) and, if you exceed that, Social Security will take back benefits equal to \$1 for every \$2 you are over the limit. That could mean you will go some number of months without receiving benefits until Social Security recovers what you owe because you exceeded the earnings limit. Of course, if you fully retire from work now that is not a concern, but it may influence a future decision to return to work. Social Security's earnings limit no longer applies after you reach your full retirement age.

Your marital status also comes into play. If you are married, and your benefit as a spouse will be more than your personal benefit will be, then there are some special considerations which might affect your claiming decision. Generally, if your spousal benefit will be more than your own benefit (from your lifetime work record), and your husband isn't yet collecting benefits, it's often wise to claim your own earlier and take the larger spouse benefit later. Of course, if you're not married you need only be concerned about your personal benefit from your own lifetime earnings record and waiting for a larger life-long benefit, if possible, is often the most prudent choice.

Those are the basic things you should consider when trying to decide when to claim your benefits. But your need for the money now, plus your health and life expectancy are also key to your decision. If you need the money earlier to make ends meet, and you won't be severely affected by the earnings limit, then claiming early can be your most prudent choice. Or, if you are not enjoying good health and have reason to believe that you won't live at least until today's average age for a woman (about 87), then that also suggests claiming early. But, if you are working and don't really need the money, and you are in good health and expect to live to a ripe old age, then waiting longer to claim a higher benefit is usually a better strategy.

The reality is that everyone's personal situation is different and there is no single answer to the question of when to claim Social Security. I hope the above gives you at least a starting point for your decision.

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Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.

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Jump balls eliminated, close contacted limited

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

REGION – Modifications for boys and girls basketball have been released and the game will look a little different, though significant limits to fan attendance will restrict how many can see the different-looking game.

In Western Massachusetts, the Pioneer Valley Interscholastic Athletic Conference has decided the first practices will not take place until Jan. 4. Several other areas of the state are following suit. With no playoffs scheduled for the winter season, the various regions have the flexibility to decide when schools will begin and end play.

The Massachusetts

Interscholastic Athletic Association has set a Dec. 14 date as the soonest teams can start practicing. Several Central Massachusetts schools will start practicing then with contests likely to begin right after the new year.

One rule that will be consistent throughout all sports is the mask mandate.

Participants must wear masks or face coverings at all times while participating in practices or games. The one caveat is that all schools have the ability to designate areas where athletes can take "mask breaks." There will be areas designated for those breaks, especially during basketball games where players go up and down the court many times wearing a mask may need to catch a

breath when the whistle blows. Because of the close contact involved with playing basketball, there was no way to play the sport safely without masks being worn.

The game will see modifications, but nothing too drastic and more along the way the timing, and setup of the game. Gameplay will be largely similar though different ideas were discussed to maintain distancing.

Like many other sports, the pre-game will be simplified. Only one captain will meet with the referees prior to the game. Starting lineups will likely be announced, but the traditional "high-five" lines will not be allowed, along with handshakes with the opposing coach.

There will be emphasis

during game play to enforce rules about freedom of movement and closely guarding opposing players. Defenders are not allowed to impede the progress of offensive players, and will enforce the five-second rule on players who are being closely guarded.

The jump ball will be eliminated in favor of a simple coin toss to give possession of the ball to one team. Alternating possession will then prevail like the rest of the game typically does.

Free throws will look a bit different with just four players allowed with the shooter. Normally six players are allowed. When a player is awarded two or three free throws, they will shoot alone until the final shot to limit the

time players are in close contact.

One bigger change that affects the end-of-game strategy for teams is the "intentional" fouls used to try and gain possessions for a team that is trailing. A team will looking to intentionally foul for that purpose will inform the referee of that intention, and then lightly tag the player with the ball upon inbounding. The referee would then blow the whistle.

Jump balls will be whistled quicker in order to limit close contact.

Rosters are limited to no more than 15 players and three coaches on the bench, though many teams do not carry more than 12 or 13 players. The MIAA is also strongly discouraging

Academy team joining Pioneers organization

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

LUDLOW – The Western Mass. Pioneers will be adding a USL Academy League soccer team in 2021. The New England Mutiny are also in the process of forming an Academy soccer team.

Both Academy soccer squads, which will be playing their home matches at historic Lusitano Stadium in Ludlow, will be made up of the top U16-U19 prospects from the Western Mass. area.

"In club soccer, you're limited to certain age groups," said Joe Ferrara, who's the owner of the Mutiny and the new Pioneers General Manager. "An academy soccer team allows talented players to play for one team regardless of their age."

The Pioneers had about 50 players try-out for the Academy League team in November.

"The Academy League team is a new program that we've added this year," said Pioneers head coach Federico Molinari. "Our main goal is to develop the best local soccer players from Western Mass. to hopefully play for the Pioneers in the future."

Molinari, along with the Pioneers assistant coaches will be coaching the Academy League team in 2021.

"We wanted to have the same coaching staff for both the USL 2 team (Pioneers) and the USL Academy team," Molinari said. "We want both of the teams to play the same type of style. I do like coaching the younger soccer players."

The plan is for the boys' Academy League team to play their home matches prior to the Pioneers matches. Both teams will also be traveling together to road matches.

The boys' team will be competing against eleven other teams in the Northeast Division of the USL Academy League.

Molinari has been coaching the Pioneers, who are the defending Northeast Conference Champions of USL League Two, since 2012. The Pioneers weren't able to play any matches in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Pioneers did not suffer any losses during the 2019 regular season. They lost in conference finals and qualified for U.S. Open Cup, which wasn't held last summer. The Pioneers also qualified for the league playoffs in 2016.

"I really enjoy coaching the Pioneers and it was painful not being able to compete in any matches last year," Molinari said. "We won our Division title in 2019 and it was our best season since I've been coaching the team. We're now thinking about the 2021 season."

Ferrara gave his thoughts about adding a girl's Academy team for the Mutiny.

"We're looking for the top girl's prospects in the area to play for the girls academy team next year," he said. "The age group will be similar to the boy's side. The girl's academy team will probably have one or two older players."

The girls Academy team

See PIONEERS, page 8

PIONEERS TRYOUTS CONCLUDE



Photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com
The Western Mass. Pioneers organization continued its tryouts for various age groups between Nov. 16 and 20, testing out the skills of many young people throughout the region to fill its various teams for the upcoming spring season. The Pioneers are hopeful for a normal schedule in 2021.

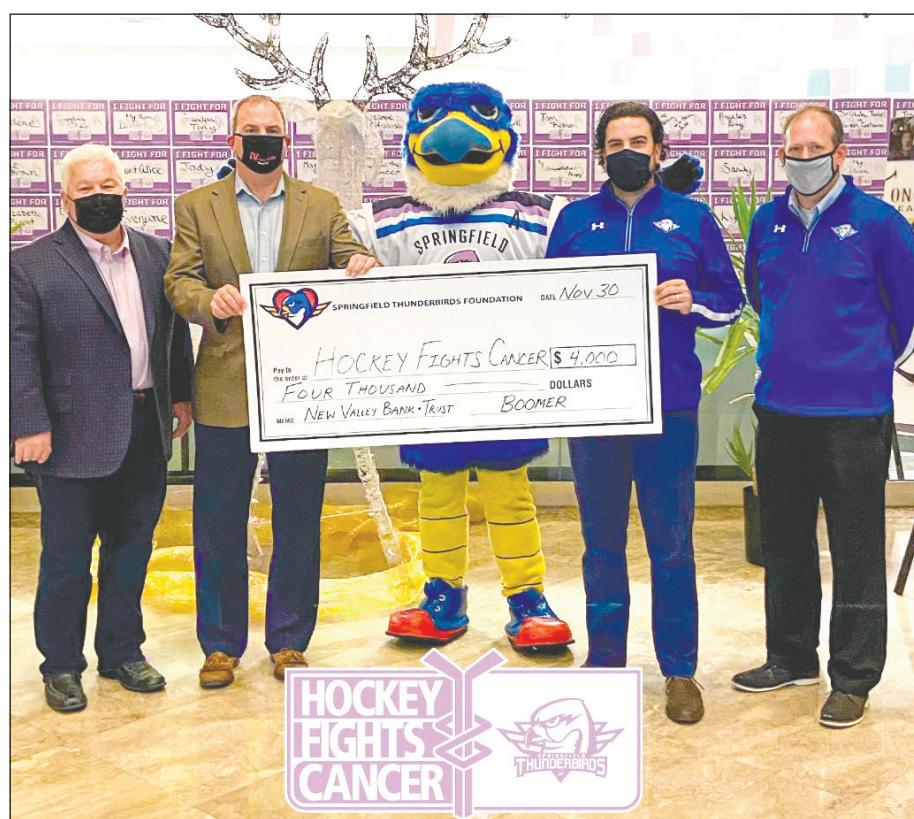
Sports

Thunderbirds make donation to cancer-related charities

SPRINGFIELD – On Nov. 30, the Springfield Thunderbirds' Foundation announced \$4,000 in donations to local cancer-related charities to cap off a successful Hockey Fights Cancer campaign during the month of November. Donations will be made to local cancer-related charities, including: Center for Human Development's Cancer House of Hope, Survivor Journeys, American Cancer Society - Relay for Life, Mercy Medical Center - Sister Caritas Cancer Center, and the national non-profit, Hockey Fights Cancer.

This season's campaign looked quite different from previous years. Typically, the Thunderbirds would host a Hockey Fights Cancer themed game at the end of November, complete with specialty lavender jerseys that are worn by the players and auctioned off after the game. This year, however, the campaign was activated on social media. Throughout the month of November, the Thunderbirds collected names on social media from fans for people they "fight for." New Valley Bank & Trust committed to donate \$5 for each submission received to the Thunderbirds' Foundation, for the first 500 submissions for a remarkable \$2,500 total donation. The names were then added to Hockey Fights Cancer placards that were placed on the windows leading to New Valley Bank & Trust's newly renovated headquarters in Monarch Place in downtown Springfield.

"As we take down the placards we are revealing our brand new headquarters location", said Jeff Sullivan, President and CEO of New Valley Bank. "We have been inspired by the personal messages of hope as we have been com-



Submitted photo

Thunderbirds Managing Partner Paul Picknelly, New Valley Bank & Trust President and CEO Jeff Sullivan, Thunderbirds Mascot Boomer, Thunderbirds President Nathan Costa, and Thunderbirds Vice President, Sales & Strategy Todd McDonald.

pleting our construction on the other side of the glass. There are heroes all around us, from our friends and family fighting cancer to the work that the Thunderbirds and others do to alleviate hunger in the community. We at New Valley continue to be very optimistic about the return of the vibrant culture of downtown Springfield as we begin to

see vaccine distribution and economic resurgence in 2021."

In addition to the contribution from New Valley Bank, the Thunderbirds also collected monetary donations on their foundation website, as well as holding a specialty game-worn jersey raffle from previous Hockey Fights Cancer games. The grand total generated through these

campaigns equaled \$4,000.

"Hockey Fights Cancer has been an incredibly important cause for our organization and across the AHL and NHL," said Thunderbirds President Nathan Costa. "Even though our season hasn't technically started yet, it was important to keep the cause front and center in our community, and we thank New Valley Bank & Trust for stepping up during this difficult time. We are grateful to all who supported the cause by purchasing a raffle ticket, making a donation to our foundation, or simply submitting a name of someone that you fight for."

PIONEERS, from page 7

will be playing home matches before the Mutiny.

Jill Serafino is going to be the head coach of the girls academy squad.

Serafino is currently the Mutiny General Manager and is an assistant coach. She's also an assistant coach for the women's soccer team at Springfield College.

The Mutiny, who celebrated their twentieth anniversary in 2019, played all of their home matches at Lusitano Stadium for the first time.

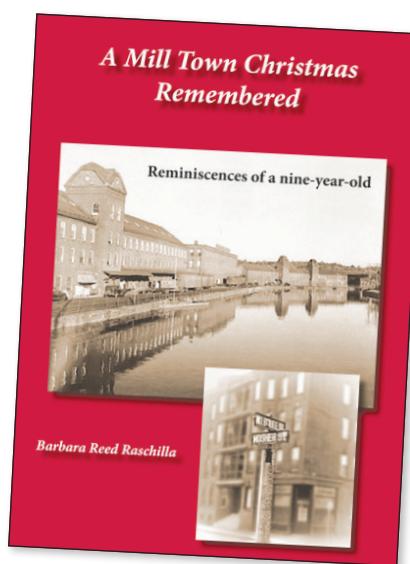
The Mutiny also finished the 2019 regular season without a loss. They lost to the Lancaster Inferno in the United Women's Soccer Eastern Conference finals.

For more information on either Academy soccer teams please contact Joe Ferrara at jferrara@wmpioneers.com or 413-330-9775.

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Written by Barbara (Reed) Raschilla

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Obituary

Donald Erick Keller, Jr.

GRANBY — Donald Keller, 65, passed away on November 30, 2020 in Holyoke. Donald was born in Erie, Pennsylvania on January 13, 1955. He is survived by his mother Ruby Keller, brother Douglas M. Keller, his children Felicia Hubacz, Erick Keller, and Daniel Keller, grandchildren Cody Keller, Ava Laine Keller, Brouche and Laydien Dominguez. He was predeceased by his father, Donald E. Keller, Sr. in 2012.

Donald was a 1973 graduate of Granby High School. He worked for many years as a cement mason.

He was a loving father, devoted son and brother and an avid outdoorsman. He spent countless hours with his family and teaching his children and grandchildren



about hunting, fishing, hiking, camping and the fine art of becoming a turkey shoot legend. Donald had an easy-going way that matched the classic rock/country music that he loved and often played along to with his jaw harp. He was crazy for horror and sci-fi movies and always had a dirty joke or picture to share. Donald will be greatly missed!

Curran O'Brien was in charge of final arrangements.

A celebration of life will be held in the summer.

Donations may be made in Donald's name to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Wildlands Fund at Mass Wildlife, 251 Causeway St., Suite 400, Boston, MA 02114.

OBITUARY POLICY: Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries. One is a free, brief Death Notice listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place. The other is a Paid Obituary, costing \$89, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice and may include a photograph. Death Notices & Paid Obituaries should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com. Exceptions will be made only when the family provides a death certificate and must be pre-paid.

TEACHERS, from page 1

needs. She explains that she keeps her camera off when in normal classes to not distract the students from learning. While this is Thompson's first year as the principle at McMahon, it's her sixth year as a principal and she's facing this year challenges head-on.

"I'm still visiting classes and supporting teachers and students," Thompson said. "The biggest change is not having face to face interactions, I'm in my office a lot which I wouldn't choose." While she misses the interaction with students and staff, Thompson said that her day is a bit more efficient than a regular in-person day. Typically, people stop her in the hall in passing, and she has more things and people to attend to that can put her off-track.

With remote learning and working she is able to meet with staff through Zoom, watch different classrooms with different links, before moving on to make calls or focus on a separate section of her work. While Thompson feels more efficient, she does explain that interactions are important and it's good to see and talk to the students. That being said the teachers are engaging with the students and working to keep school as

normal as possible. After classes there's time to debrief the lesson, support students, and figure out students next step.

"The staff is very resilient and positive throughout the day, we're isolating but we wave at each other when we pass by rooms and in the halls," Thompson said. "There's enthusiasm throughout the day and we're all working together, it's what makes this work."

The staff also had the opportunity to look over and plan out the curriculum for online over the summer, they were better prepared for the remote learning during this school's year. The staff is more focused and coherent now, Thompson said that when the parent group met last they spoke about how the schooling is better from the end of last year.

Along with focusing on the curriculum and how students are behaving and learning, staff is working to promote self-care during this time when students are on screen for so long. Staff is also working to support families and making sure that all bases are covered for remote learning.

"The lines between work and personal are blurred but the staff is doing a tremendous job," Thompson said. She and the staff are encouraged to make school as efficient as possible during these uncertain times.

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In The News

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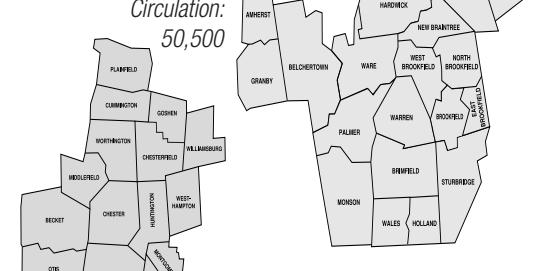
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SHOES, from page 1

and used the profits to buy more paint and invest in his hobby and art. Baez explained that he didn't know how to price things at first, but the more time he spent on the pieces the more he valued the work he was doing.

Currently Baez prices his shoes in categories and based on shoe sizes; men's sizes start at \$160, women's sizes start at \$110, and baby sizes start at \$40, though pricing still depends on the complexity of the design and the time it takes to complete it. The hobby has become something more Baez has not

thought much on the direct future path that he'll be taking as a senior but he enjoys designing shoes.

Baez explained that he's always doodled in notebooks and on pairs of shoes, and he's always been interested in customizing shoes. Baez shared that when he was in eighth grade he would watch videos on designing and customizing shoes, growing up he just assumed the paint was too expensive for him to try that path. The paint is affordable, and Baez uses the money he makes from custom shoes to invest in more paints.

"I thought the paints were way more expensive than they are, if I had known how affordable they are I would have

started a long time ago," Baez said. "When I was a freshman, I was customizing my sneakers with sharpie." Although he doesn't know his immediate path after graduating, he shared that he like the idea of a customization shop, where he can customize shoes in a building as a company rather than at home. Inspired by the customized t-shirt stores in shopping malls and tourist towns. Currently people contact Baez on his social media accounts like Instagram and Facebook, for buying custom shoes. He explained that he'd like to have it be a business if possible.

Baez also explained that he's known Brunelle as a teacher since the fifth

grade, she has seen him grow as a student and after seeing his designs she contacted the Director of Communications for Holyoke Public Schools Judy Taylor.

"It's funny because the one who spoke to Judy Taylor was my teacher since fifth grade and she just recently saw my work. It's really cool that she did that, I really appreciate it," Baez said.

Baez was able to grow his talent and his passion for small side project, he enjoys the work he does even though he gets busy with the amount of requests people send. Baez is excited to see where he can take his customization work.

WOMEN, from page 1

to 8 p.m.; the other on Thursdays, Jan. 7 through Feb. 25, from 12 noon to 1:30 p.m.

The interactive workshops will be facilitated by Annie Shibata, Ph.D., owner of Growth Mindset Leadership and Communication Coaching.

Enrollment is limited by design. In addition to weekly 90-minute group seminars, each participant can schedule a private, 30-minute session of personalized coaching with the instructor.

"One critical component that makes this training special is the one-to-one coaching that each participant receives," said Michele Cabral, HCC executive director of Business, Corporate and Professional Development. "The small group nature of the classes will allow plenty of weekly individual attention in addition to the private sessions. This is really a wonderful way for women to

invest in themselves and their futures in a small, mentored group environment."

During the program sessions, participants will learn to evaluate their communication skills and apply new communication techniques; practice the power of mindfulness; distinguish forms of influence and persuasion to create powerful messages; assess their leadership strengths; and create short- and long-term plans for career development.

Shibata was the featured presenter during the November session of HCC's 2020 Women's Leadership Luncheon Series.

"HCC started the Women's Leadership Series with the goal of creating small group discussions for women as they navigate their careers," said Cabral. "The series meets monthly over Zoom at lunchtime as a way to offer networking and mentoring to women at all levels. The 'Women Leaning Into Leadership' course takes that concept to the next level."

TOYS, from page 1

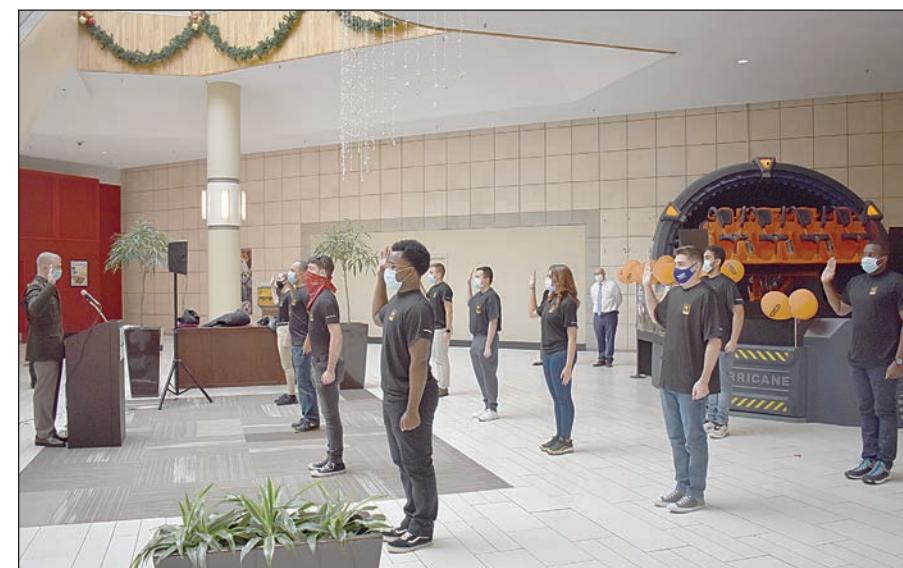
of COVID-19 health and safety restrictions, Santa will not be able to help us deliver them on Christmas morning as usual. We will however, be delivering them to individual families in need and family shelters the week leading up to Christmas Day.

FLU, from page 1

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the flu shot will be especially critical to reduce the overall impact of respiratory illness on

If you would like to donate a new, unwrapped toy, please bring donations to the lobby of the Holyoke Police Department - (138 Appleton Street, Holyoke - across from the Merry Go Round in Heritage State Park) or call Holyoke Police Detective Tony Brach at 413-536-3423 or 413-322-6900 and arrange for a gift to be picked up.

our community, protect vulnerable people from severe illness, and decrease the overall burden on the healthcare system. Contact your child's pediatrician or your local pharmacy to schedule your child's flu shot today.



Cpt. Stephen Lariviere administers the Oath to Divin Banza, James Herman, Rafael Torres, Amber Afton, Cole Maslanka, Tamara Rodriguez, Giang Tran, Ethan Lichwan, Ernst Pedanov, and Erik Davila.

Photo by Shelby Macri

OATH, from page 1

civilians too, I think sometimes people forget that."

During his introduction he thanked the new recruits for their commitment, and he thanked their parents for raising them into strong individuals.

The Oath of Enlistment is the first step in entering the Army program, Cpt. Lariviere explained that this is a big step for new recruits. From here they will wait for a ship date to an assigned post for training, after training they will be given a unit and go to a post or fort. Some new recruits are still in school and will be given their

ship date after graduating.

There are seven towns that have the company's recruiting buildings, including Pittsfield, Sturbridge, South Hadley, West Springfield, Worcester, Fitchburg, and Milford. There were two ceremonies due to the amount of new recruits and COVID safety guidelines.

Each recruiter had their own new recruits, and after the ceremony each recruiter got a picture with the Cdr. Cpt. Lariviere and their recruits. One recruiter had five new recruits, another had three new recruits, and the last had one new recruit. Each new recruit took the Oath and will be one step closer to serving.

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